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RUEHDO/AMEMBASSY DOHA 3453
RUEHJI/AMEMBASSY JIDDA 2916
RUQMKW/AMEMBASSY KUWAIT 5093
RUQMMT/AMEMBASSY MUSCAT 2626
RUEHRH/USELD RIYADH 1593
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DEPT PLS PASS MIL ADDRESSEES AS DESIRED

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: OREP PREL MARR GCC BA
SUBJECT: STAFFDEL BINNENDIJK: JULY 3 MEETING WITH
BAHRAIN FOREIGN MINISTER

1. S - ENTIRE TEXT

2. I TOOK SENIOR SFRC STAFFERS HANS BINNENDIJK AND WILLIAM ASHORTH TO MEET WITH BAHRAIN FOREIGN MINISTER SHAIKH MOHAMMED BIN MUBARAK AL-KHALIFA ON THE MORNING OF JULY 3. ON THIS FIRST WORKING DAY AFTER THE ID AL-FITR HOLIDAY, SHAIKH MOHAMMED WAS RELAXED, FRIENDLY AND EFFUSIVE. HE SEEMED GENUINELY PLEASED WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS HIS VIEWS TO THIS STAFFDEL. THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR WAS FOREMOST ON HIS MIND.

3. HE OPENED DISCUSSIONS BY QUESTIONING IRAQ'S OVERALL MILITARY SUPERIORITY OVER IRAN. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT IRAQI TROOPS ARE BETTER EQUIPPED AND SUPPLIED THAN THEIR IRANIAN COUNTERPARTS, BUT DOUBTED THAT THEY COULD MATCH THE IDEOLOGICAL FERVOR OF THEIR OPPONENTS. HE EXPRESSED HIS USUAL CONCERN OVER THE CONSEQUENCES OF AN IRANIAN BREAKTHROUGH. THE TIME TO STOP THE IRANIS IS NOW, HE MAINTAINED, BEFORE THEY SUCCESSFULLY CUT THE BASRA-BAGHDAD ROAD AND KNOCK IRAQ OUT OF THE WAR.

4. HE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT MORE COULD BE DONE TO STOP WESTERN EUROPEAN AND ISRAELI ARMS SHIPMENTS TO IRAN. WHEN QUESTIONED AS TO HIS SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON ISRAELI ARMS SHIPMENTS, HE REFERRED TO PUBLIC STATEMENTS OF FORMER ISRAELI DEFENSE MINISTER SHARON WHICH, ACCORDING TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER, WERE NOT DENIED BY ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER SHAMIR. THE FOREIGN MINISTER CAUTIONED THAT ARMS SALES TO IRAN, IF NOT STOPPED OR SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED, COULD IN THE LONG RUN SHIFT THE BALANCE OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT IN FAVOR OF IRAN.

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5. WHEN ASKED FOR HIS ASSESSMENT OF THE GCC, WHERE IT IS GOING AND WHAT HE FORESEES AS ITS FUTURE MILITARY ROLE IN THE GULF, SHAIKH MOHAMMED RESPONDED THAT THE GCC'S PRIMARY GOAL IS SIMPLE: TO MAKE ITSELF STRONG ENOUGH TO RESIST AGGRESSION. TO DO THIS, HE SAID, WE NEED OUR FRIENDS AND THE MEANS TO DEFEND OURSELVES. HE USED THIS OPPORTUNITY TO MENTION OUR REFUSAL TO SELL THE STINGER TO KUWAIT AND LINKED THIS REFUSAL TO THE LACK OF A CLEAR U.S. ARMS POLICY FOR THE GULF.

6. SHAIKH MOHAMMED STRESSED, HOWEVER, THAT GCC REGIONAL COOPERATION IS THE BEST WAY THE GULF STATES CAN DEFEND THEMSELVES. HE POSITED THAT IF THE GCC HAS ANOTHER FIVE YEARS TO CONTINUE ITS COLLECTIVE DEVELOPMENT, IT WOULD REACH A POINT WHERE IT WOULD NOT REQUIRE ANY OUTSIDE MILITARY ASSISTANCE. HE FORESEES THE GCC DEVELOPING INTO A THIRD FORCE IN THE GULF, USING ITS MILITARY STRENGTH AS A BALANCE BETWEEN IRAQ AND IRAN. WHEN ASKED IF IT WOULD BE IMPLICIT THAT THE GCC WOULD REQUIRE OUTSIDE HELP DURING THESE FIVE YEARS, SHAIKH MOHAMMED REPLIED, "OF COURSE."

7. IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THE GCC STATES WERE PREPARED TO EXTEND THEIR DEFENSES TO TANKER TRAFFIC IN THE GULF, SHAIKH MOHAMMED SAID THAT WE BOTH (GCC AND U.S.) HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES TO KEEP TRAFFIC MOVING IN THE GULF BY PROTECTING TANKERS. HE ADDED THAT THE GCC WAS CLOSE TO SOLVING THE PROBLEM IN THE UPPER GULF, BUT ACKNOWLEDGED THAT PROTECTING THE LOWER GULF WOULD BE DIFFICULT. HE ASSERTED THAT AN EFFORT HAD TO BE MADE TO PROVIDE AIR COVER FOR TANKERS TRANSITING THE SOUTHERN SECTOR.

8. WHEN ASKED ABOUT CONTINUED IRAQI STRIKES AGAINST GULF SHIPPING, SHAIKH MOHAMMED SAID THAT WHILE BAHRAIN DOES NOT SUPPORT THESE STRIKES AND DOES NOT ENCOURAGE IRAQI ESCALATION, BAHRAIN NEVERTHELESS WILL NOT CONDEMN IRAQI ACTIONS PUBLICLY.

9. WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE NEED FOR THE U.S. TO BECOME MORE DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE GULF WAR, SHAIKH MOHAMMED SAID "NOT NOW, BUT YOU ARE A GOOD RESERVE WHEN WE NEED YOU." HE ADDED THAT WHILE WE SHOULD BE PRE-

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APED FOR THE WORST, THE CURRENT U.S. POLICY TOWARD INVOLVEMENT IN THE GULF WAR IS CORRECT.

10. COMMENT: THE FOREIGN MINISTER CHOSE THIS STAFFDEL AUDIENCE TO ESPECIALLY STRESS TWO POINTS THAT HE HAS ALL BUT IGNORED IN RECENT MEETINGS I HAVE HAD WITH HIM. THE FIRST IS THAT DESPITE U.S. DISCLAIMERS, HE IS NOT PERSUADED THAT ISRAELI ARMS SHIPMENTS TO IRAQ HAVE STOPPED. THE SECOND WAS HIS EXPRESSION OF UNHAPPINESS WITH THE U.S. HANDLING OF THE KUWAITI STINGER REQUEST.

11. KUWAIT MINIMIZE CONSIDERED. LEIDEL
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